

Disciple of Dr. Akhter Hameed Khan Murdered

A Tribute to Parveen Rehman

By Nasim Yousaf

The death of Miss Parveen Rehman is a great loss for us all. She was carrying forward Dr. Akhter Hameed Khan's mission to improve the lives of the underprivileged and neglected. It hurts me to hear that her life has been taken away by heartless people.



It was around 12pm on March 13, 2013, when I heard on a Pakistani television channel that Miss Parveen Rehman, Director of the Orangi Pilot Project (OPP) (founded by the legendary Dr. Akhter Hameed Khan) had been assassinated by unidentified gunmen. She was killed while returning home after briefing foreign visitors at the OPP (Samaa TV, March 13, 2012). Sadly, Pakistan is under the strong grip of a “rule of terror.”

Ms. Rehman was born in Bangladesh (previously East Pakistan) in 1957. She moved to Pakistan with her family at a young age. She obtained her degree in Architecture in 1981 from Dawood Engineering College, Karachi. Thereafter, in 1983, she joined the

OPP. The Orangi Pilot Project is a pioneering institution in the areas of microfinance, rural and urban development, and education. It was established in Karachi in 1980 by Dr. Akhter Hameed Khan, who successfully built the organization into a replicable model that achieved worldwide acclaim and recognition. Over the years, Ms. Rehman worked closely with Dr. Khan and acquired a wealth of knowledge in housing, sanitation, health and microcredit, among other areas. During her career at OPP, she met a large number of visitors from around the world, including students, journalists, government officials, community developers, and members of non-governmental organizations. Following Dr. Khan's death, Ms. Rehman successfully ran the operation of the OPP and upheld its strong reputation throughout the world. Based on her work at OPP, Ms. Rehman could have easily pursued much more lucrative opportunities. But it is a true testament to her character that she preferred to continue working with the OPP and the people of Orangi Town.

Ms. Rehman was a soft-spoken and humble woman, who dedicated her life to uplifting the poor. In a documentary on the OPP entitled “Orangi Pilot Project (OPP) - A role model for realizing your Social Responsibility” (available on YouTube), Ms. Rehman spoke of some of the guiding principles of the OPP, which also reflect the way she lived her life:

“See with respect what people are doing...observe with your own knowledge what they are doing...learn from what the people are doing with a lot of humility...teach with gentleness, do not be in a hurry.”

It is a tragedy for the entire Pakistani nation when a true humanitarian and public servant like Ms. Rehman can be murdered simply because of her work on behalf of the impoverished. Ms. Rehman's services for OPP and the people of Orangi Town shall always be remembered. She was laid to rest on March 14, 2013 at Mohammad Shah graveyard in Karachi. She left behind her mother, two brothers and a sister.

May God rest her soul in eternal peace and provide her family the strength to bear this tragic loss.

Nasim Yousaf is a scholar and historian and author of many books and articles. His book “Dr. Akhtar Hameed Khan - Pioneer of Microcredit & Guru of Rural Development” has recently been published in the US. His current projects include a book on world famous personalities in microfinance and poverty alleviation.

Published in:

1. *The Lahore Times*, March 20, 2013
2. *News from Bangladesh*, March 22, 2013
3. *The Frontier Post*, March 25, 2013
4. *India Muslim Observer*, March 30, 2013
5. *World News Report*, March 22, 2013
6. *OYE! Times* (USA) March 22, 2013
7. *Pakistan Gazette*, March 20, 2013
8. *The Miracle News*, March 22, 2013
9. *KalPoint*, March 22, 2013
10. *Media Today* (USA), March 23, 2013
11. *Make Pakistan Better*, March 20, 2013.
12. *AllVoices*, March 20, 2013